

ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 July 1983

PARIS

BY JEFFREY ULBRICH

The leader of rebels in northern Chad said Friday he is holding an American, Mark Frohardt, 32, of Colorado Springs, Colo., as a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency, the French news agency Agence France Presse reported.

The French humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders said Frohardt was the technical coordinator for all its medical teams in Chad. It said it hoped "this misunderstanding will be cleared up rapidly."

AFP said ex-President Goukouni Oueddei told a group of journalists in Faya-Largeau, the northern oasis town his rebels captured last week, that Frohardt "is an agent of the CIA, and he will be considered as such until proved the contrary."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Carolyn Johnson said: "The department has seen reports that an American is being detained in the area and is looking into them." She did not elaborate.

Goukouni said he deduced the American was a spy because he was not on a list of three foreign medical personnel in the town that the Geneva headquarters of the International Red Cross sent to his headquarters in Libya.

"We found an American too many," the rebel leader was quoted as saying. "He must furnish us with explanations. We won't harm him, but he will be treated as a spy."

Roger Frohardt, Frohardt's uncle, said in Colorado Springs the family got first word of the incident from news reports Friday afternoon. He said some officials of Doctors Without Borders earlier had expressed concern that Frohardt might be accused of spying.

"They were saying he might be mistaken for a CIA agent simply because he is a U.S. citizen," he said. "He's been around the world and to a lot of exciting places, but this is the first time something like this has happened."

The uncle said Frohardt's parents had received a letter from him Thursday that did not indicate problems. Enclosed in the letter were some photographs of Frohardt on a camel, he said. The parents could not be reached for comment.

AFP said Frohardt told the journalists he assumed the Red Cross in Geneva did not know he was there because he arrived on the same plane with the Red Cross representative, and the battle for the town began half an hour later.

"His work consists of going frequently to all of the 10 health centers where the association operates," Doctors Without Borders said in a statement. "It was in this capacity that he went to Faya-Largeau in the company of the International Red Cross representative."

AFP said Frohardt was continuing to work with the foreign medical team, and Goukouni's men did not try to prevent him talking with the journalists.

*CONTINUED*